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## Humberto Reynoso-Vallejo on Multicultural Processes in Evaluation

Humberto Reynoso-Vallejo  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

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## **Humberto Reynoso-Vallejo on Multicultural Processes in Evaluation**

I am Humberto Reynoso-Vallejo a Director for Program Evaluation with the [Center for Health Policy and Research](#) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Conducting evaluation entails the incorporation of multicultural features of individuals and/or organizations into the process of data collection and analysis. These multicultural features are socially constructed and are translated into layers of identity reflected as multicultural identity. Multicultural identity has a powerful impact on individuals since it confers particular social meanings to each layer (e.g. we may have to work with a lesbian African-American woman, or a recent male immigrant from Guatemala with a particular medical condition, or an organization with employees from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds). Life chances and opportunities are determined by these layers of identity that place some individuals in privileged positions based on certain dominant principles in society (e.g., White, male, heterosexual, able-bodied.).

Multicultural processes include the incorporation of multiple layers of identity in the evaluation. These layers work in complex ways and we may significantly enrich our work when including them in the analysis. Organizations or stakeholders can be seen as entities with a multicultural identity, some more aware than others.

### **Hot tips:**

- Take appropriate notes of multicultural processes during the evaluation process which may be eventually included on your reports or articles as important material.
- Be aware of your own multicultural identity and how this interacts with stakeholders. Be open and reject myths such as color blindness. Try to build coalitions with diverse groups.
- Conduct an assessment of the multiculturalism of the organization/stakeholders in terms of their social, cultural, and political representation; value, celebrate and capitalize on differences; and level of engagement in eliminating forms of oppression such as racism, sexism, and ageism. Quantity and quality of services may be related to an organization's ability to provide a socially just working environment for all its employees.
- Be emphatic and place yourself in the other person's shoes paying attention to your reactions during that process.
- Be aware of your reactions to difference and, when pertinent, included this in your deliverables.
- Using "I" statements rather than "we" or "you", allows you to be more fully present in the interchange and avoids the mistake of trying to represent people whose multicultural background is similar to yours, or make erroneous assumptions about people you are interacting with that may share similar identities.

- Avoid jumping to conclusions about people you are interacting with based on socially learned preconceived notions about certain population groups.
- Pay special attention to content (what we say) and process (how we say it).
- Be aware of Intent (what you are trying to convey) and impact (the person's reaction of what you are saying).